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Letter dated 7 August 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

As you may be aware, on 29 August 2017, during its presidency of the Security Council, Egypt is organizing an open debate of the Security Council on the theme "United Nations peacekeeping operations: their potential contribution to the overarching goal of sustaining peace".

The aim of the open debate is to highlight the potential contribution of peacekeeping mandates to the overarching goal of sustaining peace and to explore practical ways for the Security Council to improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions and their role in conflict prevention, management and resolution, as well as their contribution to an orderly transition to reconstruction and development in an inclusive manner, which are fundamental pillars for sustaining peace. Please find attached the concept note for the debate (see annex), which I kindly request to be circulated to the Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Amr **Aboulatta**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations

17-13695 (E) 140817

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Annex to the letter dated 7 August 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept paper

Security Council open debate

United Nations peacekeeping operations: their potential contribution to the overarching goal of sustaining peace

1. Context

The complex and emerging challenges to international peace and security necessitate a more robust, coherent and comprehensive United Nations approach throughout the various stages of conflicts. There is an emerging wisdom that the United Nations must deploy the tools that are most conducive to preventing and addressing the root causes of the violent conflicts for which they are deployed, with a view to identifying durable solutions. In this context, the three major United Nations reviews of 2015 concluded that it is imperative for the Organization to shift from a sequence to a continuum of responses to the changing and complex security challenges of today in order to contribute to realizing the ultimate goal of sustaining peace.

In its resolution 2282 (2016), the Security Council defined sustaining peace as a goal and a process to build a common vision of a society, especially when emerging from conflict. It also noted that sustaining peace included "activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation, and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development". This broad definition indicated that the range of tools and activities available to the United Nations needed to be fully explored, deployed throughout the continuum of response and tailored to the specific context they were intended to address. These tools cover a range of engagements, from preventive diplomacy to peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding.

In this connection, in resolution 2086 (2013), the Security Council welcomed "the contribution of peacekeeping operations to a comprehensive strategy for durable peace and security" and emphasized "that United Nations peacekeeping activities should be conducted in a manner so as to facilitate post-conflict peacebuilding, prevention of relapse of armed conflict and progress towards sustainable peace and development". It further stressed "the importance of grasping the challenges of peacebuilding from the inception of a peacekeeping mission" "so as to ensure coherence between, and integration of, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development to achieve an effective response to post-conflict situations from the outset".

In April 2017, the Council was invited to focus on the aspect of peacekeeping reform related to the political foundations necessary for the success of peacekeeping missions and to analyse whether the mandated tasks and overall concept of the mission are consistent with political realities on the ground. It is necessary, however, that the Council further develop its consideration of the question of the effectiveness of peacekeeping mandates by examining whether and how they contribute to sustaining peace, as part of a continuum of response.

Therefore, and in addition to their essential military and police-related security and protection objectives, peacekeeping mandates should be: (a) adaptable to emerging political and operational challenges throughout the various stages of post-conflict engagement; (b) designed around a range of integrated political, programmatic and operational tasks that prioritize support for building inclusive and effective national institutions and strengthening national capacities; (c) measured against clearly defined political and governance benchmarks; (d) guided by the broader regional and cross-border context and dynamics; and (e) envisaged with a clear exit strategy that seeks to empower national, regional, bilateral and United Nations actors to help lay the foundations for the long-term objective of sustaining peace.

These five parameters for the design, implementation and review of peacekeeping mandates would not only enhance the operational effectiveness of the missions, but would likely increase their efficiency in financial terms.

2. Objective

The open debate seeks to highlight the potential contribution of peacekeeping mandates to the overarching goal of sustaining peace, drawing upon, to the extent possible, the varying contexts in which existing or drawing-down peacekeeping missions operate. It would explore practical ways for the Security Council to improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions and their role in conflict prevention, management and resolution, as well as their contribution to an orderly transition to reconstruction and development in an inclusive manner, which are fundamental pillars for sustaining peace.

3. Key issues for consideration and elaboration

Member States are encouraged to address the following questions, drawing on their respective understanding and perspectives of situations where peacekeeping mandates are either in place or in their exit phase. They are also invited to reflect upon the potential for enhancing the Peacebuilding Commission's advisory function to the Security Council, as appropriate, in the following areas.

a. Different mandates in different contexts (such as the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic)

- What is the analytical framework required in order for the Council to consider changes to United Nations peacekeeping mandates so that they are better and continuously adapted to the ever-changing realities on the ground and so that they contribute to the broader political and development foundations necessary for sustaining peace?
- How best can peacekeeping mandates complement existing national, regional and international efforts aimed at advancing and encouraging dialogue and national reconciliation?
- How can peacekeeping mandates be devised to ensure regular and structured engagement with local communities, including women and youth, religious leaders and local authorities in order to support the establishment of social cohesion in conflict-affected areas?

b. National ownership and managing the transition towards exit (such as the United Nations Mission in Liberia and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti)

- How should the Security Council ensure that, as missions draw down, peacekeeping mandates are aligned with and supportive of national priorities?
- In which way should the structure and integrated components of peacekeeping missions be adapted over time and during the drawdown phase in order to complement efforts aimed at strengthening national capacities and institutions for sustaining peace?

4. Briefers

The Secretary-General (or Deputy Secretary-General) (to be confirmed); Youssef Mahmoud, Senior Advisor, International Peace Institute, former member of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations; Gert Rosenthal, former Chair of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture.

5. Outcome/follow-up

No outcome is envisaged at the debate. However, the debate is intended to launch follow-up regional consultations in Africa, with a view to further generating perspectives from the African Union and key actors that host or contribute to peacekeeping operations on the continent.